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# THE ABORIGINES OF THE PROVINCE OF SANTA MARTA, COLOMBIA

By FRANCIS C. NICHOLAS

During the last five years I have made extensive explorations among the Indians of the ancient Spanish Province of Santa Marta, Colombia (see map, page 649), where I found interesting remains of prehistoric peoples and the surviving remnants of once powerful tribes.

In a rare work bearing the title *Floresta de la Santa Iglesia Catedral de la Ciudad de Santa Marta*, written by Father Alvarez Don José Nicolas de la Rosa, in 1739, I have found an interesting account of the Indians as this Spanish priest knew them. The book records the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Santa Marta, and was authorized to be published by the ecclesiastical authorities at various dates, reaching its final approval in 1755 by Fray Pedro de Alva, M. R. P. M., of the Convent of San Felipe and of the Court at Madrid. It was reprinted at Valencia in 1833.

The book forms a stepping-stone to a study of the history and antiquities of the Indians of northern South America. I have made a nearly literal translation from its pages, and in conjunction therewith have recorded my personal observations on the Indians as they are found today—more than one hundred and sixty years after the time of the Spanish priest, who wrote more than two hundred and fifty years later than the date of the documents quoted in his history.

Following is a translation of portions of the work relating to the Indians of the Province of Santa Marta :

*Customs of the peaceable Indians and of those who have been conquered, with the derivation of their names and the derivation of the term "demora."*

The Indians are in general all called "Caribs" because of their horrible and abominable vice of eating human flesh, a custom even now continued by many of those who have been conquered. Of themselves they have distinctive names, and the Spaniards on conquering them gave the tribes names according to their different customs; for example, the Moscas (Flies), of Nuevo Reino, who were so numerous that there was not found a name more appropriate. The Moscas are of another diocese, and it is not intended to notice here other than the interpretation of the names of those Indians found in our Province of Santa Marta.

Before discussing their names it will be reasonable to give some account of the most ordinary customs of those who have been conquered and live in the villages of their different parishes subject to doctrine, vassalage, and *demora*, and, after considering what derivation is had in this word *demora*, to proceed to describe the non-pacified Indians of whom there are various tribes, such as Chimilas, Alcoholados, Aurohuacos, Guagiros, Cosinas, Tupes, Acanayutos, Pampanillas, Orejones, Motilones, and Pintados.

The word *demora* relates to the tribute that was imposed on the Indians after they were conquered, to provide for a watch and vassalage over them, the right to collect which was granted to the conquerors of the Indians and their descendants; and the conquerors later gave this right to the Church to provide for the maintenance of teachers, missionaries, churches, ornaments, bodily medicines, and other things that would contribute to the education and public health of the Indians, and this, in my opinion, is the subject referred to in the Royal Laws<sup>1</sup> established generally in the Indians' favor by our monarchs, who, as they are true Catholics, seek ever to elevate the spiritual welfare of a people so recent to their kingdom. At first the Indians paid twelve dollars each year in tribute, but later the piety and heavenly Christianity of our Princess became so permanently established in favor of these new vassals, that to relieve them of all possible difficulty

<sup>1</sup> Lib. 6, tit. 5, *Nueva Recopilacion de las Leyes de Indias*.

or impediment in sustaining the doctrine, this tribute was reduced to the reasonable sum of four dollars per year, which to this day is paid by all the Indians of our province—reduced to that rate lest they forget the vassalage due their Majesties, and because of the embarrassment (cost) to acquire it, they forget the mysteries of our holy faith. The name of this tribute, in my opinion and in that of various prudent persons, is no other thing than the delay in its payment through the resistance of the Indians to the arms of Spain. This tribute, excepting only the caciques, all pay from the age of eighteen years till they are fifty-eight, the women being generally relieved from it, and likewise, with special regard, the captains, municipal governors called *alcaldes*, headmen, and other officers during the term of their office. Because of this payment, these Indians who live subject to doctrine, vassalage, and tribute, are commonly called *demorados*.

The Indians of the Province of Santa Marta who live peaceably, paying tribute, are in their physiognomy like all others generally—of medium stature, squat, broad-shouldered, wide between the eyes, of equal thickness of waist and chest, feet and hands small but broad, toast-colored, hair black, coarse, and faded. They are quick for bad and slow for good, poor in spirit, and miserable but frank and unrestrained in their vices. They consume food in quantities when it is easily obtained, and sleep from the first darkness of the night till the cock crows. Before morning breaks they bathe and frequently repeat it through the day; and because of their passion for the water they have always their houses on the banks of the rivers, and naturally they are fine swimmers and ardent fishermen, the instruments for which are the most valued possessions of their houses, their poor industry inventing the traps, dragnets, harpoons, and hooks on which they employ the greatest care.

They have no beard nor any hair on the other parts of their bodies, and he who has it is reported of mixed blood among them, and is not recognized as an Indian. They believe among them-

selves that without them the Spaniards would be of little value, and are commonly heard to say, "What would the whites do without the Indians?"

Their most highly esteemed food is fish, and game from the forests, because these cost only the effort of fishing and hunting which is naturally so pleasing to them. In one or another viand they must have an over-abundance of salt, of which they are so passionately fond that whatever they may want for maintenance can be supplied by a ball of corn and a lump of salt. They have no vegetables except yucca, plantain, squash, potato or other roots, and satisfy themselves with the ball of corn. They eat twice a day, but the hunger between meals they satisfy by drinking, for which they are evilly disposed, drunkenness not being among them a bad sight, though they note it among the whites, having little estimation for those who are drunkards. Their ordinary liquors are chicha, guarapo, vacano, and palm wine. They make chicha of corn toasted and put to sour; the guarapo is molasses from sugar-cane mixed with water and left to ferment; the vacano is yucca cooked and masticated; and the palm wine is made from the sap of the curva palm. Needing so little they make their cultivation very small, the men only clearing the land, and it is then the obligation of the women — mother, sister, or daughter — to assist the men, gather the fruit, carry it on their backs to their houses, prepare it, bring the wood and water, stack the corn, and everything else. The man only hunts and fishes, but not after he has enough for the day. His wants supplied, he rocks himself in his hammock until the woman has prepared the meal.

The dress of the men is reduced to a short jacket and drawers of cotton muslin; the women, a white shawl and petticoat of coarse cotton. In their houses they always go naked from the waist up; only the caciques use shirts and foot-coverings, and their wives slippers to distinguish them from other women.

The industry for which the Indian is most useful is to drive and tend animals, or as a servant, fisherman, or boatman. The

value of his work must be paid in advance or he will do nothing ; and as the Indians are accustomed to drink viciously without providing anything for the support of their families, it is very little that they will do for useful industries.

The people of the coast spin cotton, weave hammocks and ropes, and make palm hats, fans, and brooms ; others make pottery—some of good quality, but generally very ordinary—; many of the Indians raise hens and other domestic creatures, and they carry all these products on their backs to sell in the cities. The women of the interior country clean sisal, of which they make thread to knit sacks, saddle-bags, and slippers ; and they have other industries according to the countries in which they live, with the result that the women are continually working, being much more agile and thrifty than the men.

To make less work in clearing the forest for planting, they have introduced a method of exchange called *chagua*, for which on one day all or part of the men of the town join together, each with his ax and machete, and among them all they clear the ground and leave it ready for sowing. The owner of the *chagua* must give them to eat and drink that day, and for this he provides by fishing and hunting, and his women supply abundant jars of chicha. This among them is a holiday, and they make it a feast, and on such days it is necessary that the priest should say mass early and have a care that they hear it. At night, if any drink remains, they form a dance which is continued until all has been consumed. They pay again in return, and if one of those who attended makes his *chagua*, the Indian who received the benefit must attend in his turn. They do the same when a house is to be built, and having brought together the material, which is timber, cane, vines, and palm-leaves, they can by a *chagua* make a house in two days.

When a child is to be born, the Indian woman shuts herself alone in her house, first providing two jars of warm water in which later she bathes with her child, and after bathing remains

in her hammock for nine days and is attended by other women of the village ; and if she makes any cry or complaint they hold her in offense. The child is named for the first bird that sings or animal that cries or growls after its birth, and among them the child is better known by this name than by the holy name given it in baptism. After the nine days the woman goes to the river and bathes with her child and remains out of the village, and she is then visited by all the Indian women. In place of a family name—except among the descendants of those families who have preserved their names since the conquest—they take the name of their owners or directors, as Majias, Hincapie, Bustamente, Nuñez, etc. If the owner whom the Indian serves has any other name or title, the Indian copies that name also, as Obispo, Gobernador, Contador, etc.

All these Indians speak Spanish with clearness, although with rather ordinary words ; yet they have not forgotten their native tongue, which is distinct in each tribe according to the primitive races from which partially they descend. They use Spanish at times in their meetings, dances, and councils if one does not understand the language of the others. All generally use the bow and arrow for their hunting and fishing, and all are children of ingratitude and dishonesty ; but considered as miserable, ignorant, and poor in spirit, they must be treated charitably that the root of the Catholic faith may become deeper among them, though now they are as a drop of water shut in a stone.

The Aurohuaco Indians are also considered peaceable because they live subject to the faith, vassalage, and demora in the Sierra Nevada between Santa Marta and Rio Hacha. These have various customs and less intercourse with the Spaniards. This name Aurohuaco we translate, in Spanish, Oro Escondido (Hidden Gold), because of very truth in these sierras is the Potosi of all the coast in richness of gold, silver, copper, lead, and a quantity of precious stones—not only in the tombs that the ancient Indians, progenitors of these Aurohuacos, made for their graves, but

also minerals according to the veins that one finds in those mountains.

It is impossible to secure the graves, tombs, and hidden treasure, because the Indians threaten with death the first who tells of it; nor will they help to discover mines because of the difficulties that surround them. These Indians are those who need, more than all of the province, to hear the evangelical voice of St Louis Beltran, and according to tradition were those who were visited by the Apostle St Thomas, according to those who saw and communicated the first accounts of them. This is further indicated in their dress, which they use as the Apostle's,—a long robe of cotton girt about the waist. The rich among them wear a diadem of tortoise-shell, the poor a band of plaited palm above the forehead made in a semicircle and placed about the head to protect the eyes from the heat of the sun and to retain the hair. The face being humble and serene, and using but few words, they are by nature peaceable. They do not use bows and arrows, nor any arms, defensive or offensive. Their fights and quarrels cause one to laugh, because their mode of avenging grievances one with the other is to go out to a place agreed upon, where there is a rock or great tree, each one carrying his cane (a black stick made of the heart of an elastic, lustrous wood), and then they strike ardently at the tree or rock, meanwhile uttering a multitude of insulting words until one cracks or breaks his stick. To this one is accredited the victory, his enemy recognizing him as the braver; and, embracing, they return to their homes, renewing friendship and drinking.

The food of these Indians is fish, conches, and lobsters, which they catch in the sea, and, rarely, beef; they do not hunt, there being no animals or birds in their mountains because of the snow which freezes in those distant places. They mix the ball of corn with yucca, potato, or aracacha: they call it *naiboa*. It is of a different flavor from ordinary unleavened corn-bread, and is not so nourishing.



Their women do the planting, because the men are occupied in weaving blankets and sleeping-hammocks of cotton; or sacks, saddle-bags, and little hammocks of henequen. The thread for these things the Indians spin while being instructed in doctrine. The Indian women, when they go to the field to work and when they return from them, carry loads, greater or smaller; and, although they walk embarrassed with a young child in their arms, take a load of corn, vegetables, fruits, wood, or water, and manage it all because all is carried in a sack on the back, hanging from the forehead to free the hands. In the mountains inhabited by these Indians there is an abundance of products that are not found in other regions: fruits, flowers, vegetables, and medicinal plants, all of which are cultivated or gathered by the Indians and carried by the women in heavy loads suspended from the forehead.

The adornments of these Aurohuacos<sup>1</sup> in the celebration of their feasts, dances, and ceremonies are of the finest gold—ear-rings, bracelets, and necklaces,—though many of the poorest use ornaments of an inferior gold. The Aurohuaco women are accustomed to the bath when a child is born, as the others; and under the same circumstances give names of animals or birds, except if those who are not married give birth, then the child is reputed a bad animal and is so called, and the mother is so disgraced that no Indian will marry her.

They all have the vice of chewing jaya (coca), a leaf that they cultivate in their gardens; and they always have in their hands the poporo, which is a little calabash, highly polished, with a belt in the middle and a cord that holds it, and a little stick in the opening at one end. This vice they use by making very white lime of sifted shells, which they put in the poporo. The jaya leaves are carried, toasted, in a bag slung across the shoulder; they put a little of it in the mouth, and wetting the point of the stick, put it in the poporo, that it may receive the lime; they then put it in

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<sup>1</sup> Father de la Rosa spells it also "Orohuacos," but the previous form is here used throughout.

the mouth, and mixing it with the jaya, chew and swallow the liquor. This they repeat day and night, and so much that they are twirling the stick in the poporo all the day, and with the violence of the mixture create a shell around the teeth, more or less great according to the time they have used it. The Indian who quickest makes this circle is considered the most expert in the use of the jaya. This mixture<sup>1</sup> made to a powder is a cure for toothache, and for this they save it and sell it to the Spaniards.

The Indians of San Sebastian, on the southern side of the mountains, have the same customs as these and are also taken for Aurohuacos because they live in the same snowy country, although more distant from the cordillera.

On one of the great streams where the Rancheria river passes the mountains, the Aurohuacos have a house of worship which they call *canzamaria*, and in which they have their idol formed of feathers of a variety of changeable colors. For its care a family live in that place, but always a little retired from the temple; and each month when the new moon rises, they go to celebrate their feasts and dances, where they respect nothing, and become grossly drunk; and when they have made the adoration they call it *mohan*, and with whistle and cry call up the Devil (literally, the dead), who comes invisibly and is introduced in the idol where it speaks and instructs them in their tongue, and they give answer in their native language. There are many *canzamarias*, each rich man having his own. The adorations and feasts are made by invitation of the principal people, and for these the Indians go one month to one and another month to another *canzamaria* successively all the year in the first two, three, or four days of the new moon; afterward they return to their cities laden with yucca, agrocacha, turmas,<sup>2</sup> apples, and other roots and fruits, their need of which is the real reason for their going. This feast

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<sup>1</sup> Probably the jaya (coca) and lime.

<sup>2</sup> A word not understood now in the province; it may mean *tumas*, a kind of red bead found in the ancient graves and highly esteemed by the Aurohuacos of today.

the Aurohuacos call the *Mamaron*, that is to say, "Deep land"; and the peaks of the sierra they call *chiviron*,—"inclined land."

The land about the canzamaría at the headwaters of the Rio Rancheria was the Pantheon where they buried the important Indians; there one can see more than eighty tombs mounted with stone, and in the plain about it various houses where they entertain those who go to the feasts. The road to go down to this temple passes over the highest of the mountains, and there is in the peak a group of trees that the Aurohuacos call *haichos*. These are supported by water coming down continually from the snow and mountains, and have in their midst a clear spring, sweet and fresh, containing that which creates an appetite in those who travel there and relieves their great necessity from thirst, because, as the distance from the river is great and the road rough, it would be impossible to provide oneself with water if nature had not put there this providence.

Other canzamarías they have, greater and more remote, to which they go each two years for the same feast in the new moon of January, because it is the clearest and most beautiful of the year and is considered by them superior to those of other months; they call it *Zacomero Major*. This feast is for them so precious that those who cannot go from age or infirmity are carried in a hammock, that they may enjoy the benefits they hold so important. The priests cannot turn them nor prevent this custom because the roughness of the sierra, danger of those roads, and inclemency of the snow will not permit that they go to prevent the ceremonies; and though priests in various times, reinforcing their delicate strength with the desire to honor God, have burned some of the canzamarías, destroyed the ornaments, and preached frequently against these superstitions, using punishment many times, it has all been in vain because the idols have been taken deeper among the mountains where they are repaired, and the Indians then excuse themselves, saying that it is neither rite nor adoration, but a custom of their fathers; and they continue to render

in secret the holocaust to the idol, and the people are satisfied and have no fear of the punishment of the true God.

There is in the sierra a cave that the Aurohuacos call Cave of the Holy Ancient (Santo Viejo), from the tradition of their fathers that there the Apostle St Thomas lived when he preached to them, and they look on it with some respect and measure their journeys to pass the night there, at the same time protecting themselves from the frost while they stop to rest on their journey in that place which they reverence. They are so rarely annoyed, and their natures are so serene, that they do not object to show the cave or the canzamaría to any priest who may care to see it, even though the priests may often have done harm to their idols; and thus they appear not to hold the idol against the church, but they themselves know that they can rebuild the canzamaría, in which they have the fault.

These Indians hold it an honorable death to hang themselves, and a sick person will do so on losing hope of health. The method of hanging among the Aurohuacos is peculiar, because it is strangling rather than hanging. The Indian about to kill himself sits on a stone, and presently ties the two ends of a cord, having a noose in the center, one to each foot, and making equal force with his feet, tightens the noose and obtains death in this way, as would be done among us by using the hands. If the sick individual has not the valor to strangle himself, the other Indians consider him without hope of life, and presently, if he remain quiet or is without strength from his sufferings, they bury him half alive, and have the belief that he presently passes after his death to the house of the sun, and for this they do not say, "Now such a one is dead," but, "Now he travels," or, "He now sits beside the sun."

The Aurohuaco who becomes a widower maintains a period of mourning for twenty days without using the poporo, which is for them greater denial than not to eat; and it is a scandal among them if, in the days destined for this fast, the widower uses the

poporo even though it is only to take it in the hands, and he who does so they consider a man of little sentiment, and will not give him another woman because he did not care to keep that custom.

They do not live together as man and wife in the night, because they are persuaded that a child conceived in the night will be born blind; nor do they live together at any time, but occupy separate huts with a great stone between them, to which the woman goes to put the food she has prepared for her husband.

The children do not inherit from the dead Indian, but his goods and also his family are all taken to the cacique, who helps them in their necessity, such being the custom by which they live and govern their nation.

The Pintados are subjected to demora like the Aurohuacos, and are settled in the jurisdiction of the town of Tenerife, where they pay their tribute. Their name was given by the Spaniards because from childhood they cut the flesh, introducing in each cut a different pigment, and after the wounds are healed the whole body is painted with a variety of colors. They walk naked except for a small gourd and belt, their painted bodies being their finest dress, especially when matched with brilliant feathers placed in their hair, which is held in place by a turban. They have also feathers on their arrows and other weapons, and in these times those who go to live near their country must have continual watchfulness and caution. The Pintados are distinguished from the other Caribs by their painted bodies; but those who live in the district (near the city) have modified this custom, with the care of the religious teachers, and they are seen dressed as other peaceable Indians. The Pintados are more rational than the other Indians, and with them we will not detain ourselves more.

Those who infest the country about Santa Marta, having their habitations among the mountains above the Rio Frio, from where they make their excursions to the seacoast and to Rio Grande de la Magdalena, are the Indians that by mistake they call Chimi-lenas, their proper name being Chimiles, which is the same as

saying that they are many, because they were so many that they even exceeded the Moscas. They are of great ability in managing a bow and arrow that they use, but they are traitors, and do not come out on being discovered, remaining hidden among the trees from which they attack the roads to kill without risk to themselves, and satisfy their barbarous appetite to destroy travelers. They are so subtle in this and in making their way through the woods that much vigilance is necessary to hear them, and usually they are discovered by the damage they do when there is no opportunity to remedy it. To protect themselves from the plague of mosquitos (small flies) they anoint the body with a gum they call *vija*. Their hair is long and falls over the shoulders and the face, giving them a ferocious appearance, which is increased by their harsh voices and their habit of crying out after they have wrought some damage. There are among them monstrosities of nature, and the Spaniards have succeeded in killing Indians with double sets of teeth. They do not use much salt in their food, which consists of the flesh of wild animals smoked in quarters, broth of boiled corn ground and mixed with yucca, and potatoes and yams. They make rude cultivations, of which many have been burned with their huts in the expeditions that the Spaniards have made in the summers to repulse them. They use the drinks of the other Indians, and have places for uniting in their dances and feasts and to adore an idol which, under the influence of the Devil, they reverence, asking of it divinations and other superstitions. Each man takes as many women as he can maintain, and most esteem themselves by the number of their wives. Their preparations when a child is born are like those among the other Indians, except that the mother bathes with her child in a cold brook with but little ceremony. Finally, they are barbarous in all their customs; nobody can give account of their interior political affairs, because nobody has lived among them.

The Indians that are called Alcoholados are of this same race, and all belong to the Chimile nation; but when the Spaniards in

their conquest met those who painted lines under their eyes with vija, they gave them the name Alcoholados, which was perhaps to say that this barbarity made them more horrible in appearance. There is no doubt that these varied marks were designed by their divinations and by the medicine-men to give the Spaniards the belief that their tribes were infinite in number and their conquest was impossible, and for this they were left to continue their diabolical adorations, protected by the impression that their infernal cunning had cultivated. This is according to tradition and has been verified by experience, and for this the Alcoholados, Chimiles, and Pintados are of the same race and in no important way different in their customs or manners.

The Orejones (Big-eared) Indians live on the river Cisar, in the navigation of which they have made frequent damage, and those who travel there have met with many sorry experiences. This name was also given by the Spaniards because they have the lower part of the ears slit in the center to hold ornaments of gold, which pendants were their greatest ornament in the men as well as in the women, and as the ornaments were of poor work and heavy, the slit to support them was made very large. The national name of these Indians was Tomocos, which in Spanish means "Mocos de Oro" because they also break the septum of the nose, introducing there another greater ornament, and some have also a bar of gold in proportion to the thickness of the hole they had made. These Indians still preserve a part of their ancient religion, maintaining in the depths of the woods a camp or great hut which they call the *tupe*, in which they unite to render adoration and ask divinations from a figure that they have hanging from a beam and dressed with leaves and aromatic branches, with turban of bright plumes, and in the hands its bow and arrows. Around the camp there are many pots and jars of drink for the men who go there, and there are benches to rest on for those who come out of the dance, which they form in a circle with the idol in the center; and it is an obligation in that barbarous holocaust

that they announce their intentions for the future, and the idol commands what it wishes they should do. This feast was attended by the Indians of the town of Guataca, which is near the Lagunas de Zapatosa; and to correct this superstition that city has been destroyed and the few Indians who lived there were taken to the pueblo of Peñon that the priest might subject them to the doctrine. The Indians of this pueblo of Peñon are of the same race as the Orejones and are accustomed to pierce the ears but not the nose, and it is from them that the little Indian maiden came out of the woods to the church of Tamalameque, asking for baptism, impelled by the virgin of the Candilario of Banco. The Orejones of the forests remain in their barbarous customs of insults and murder. They walk naked, covering the body with vija gum, their hair loose but sometimes held in place with their turbans of plumes. They eat wild meat, and make their plantations to grow corn and roots, and make their drinks in order that they may become drunk at the feasts to their idol. Among them the ceremonies of childbirth are as with the other Indians except that they are conducted with more propriety than among the Chimiles. They do not disdain to eat human flesh when in their assaults they can secure the body of one whom they have killed with their arrows. These arrows are deadly weapons, but not all the wounds are mortal, even though they penetrate some depth, and the reason for this is because the poison (which is the greatest cause for the danger) they do not put on the arrowpoint, fearing that its strength will cause the metal to lose its temper, or they perhaps think that the metal will moderate the strength of the poison, and consequently they put it in the binding; and if the wound, though it may be deep, does not touch the thread by which the tip is fastened to the arrow, there is no danger or risk of death except that of a natural wound; but though the cut has been superficial, or only below the skin, if it touches the binding, the wound is death. The arrows that are tipped with a shark's tooth, or hardwood worked into a



point, are the worst because these they make without fear of loss, and saturate them with poison.

In considering an obscure matter one must look only to that which is most certain, and as the Indians of our Province of Santa Marta are not capable of giving the interpretation of their names, one must, in accordance with the law of obscure matter, look for a natural reason, and presume that their names have had their origin in some act, occasion, or custom, and were given them by the Spaniards at their first encounters. There is then no difficulty in interpreting their names, and I will proceed with the material of the previous chapter without clouding the work by writing things on which there can be a doubt.

The Acanayuto Indians were those who by their frequent assaults destroyed the city of Becerril of the Field, but their descendants who today are living on those plains are subject in part to the mission of the Augustine fathers. This name Acanayuto comes from those battle-cries with which the Spaniards insulted the Indians in their combats. One of the most common was to say "*Ha Canalla!*" and as the Indians in general pronounced the *ll* as *y*, they would repeat the words, saying "Acanaya." This is a tradition and is reasonable to believe from the similarity of the word, and if we seek among the customs they will be found *canalle* because these Indians are in a high degree malicious, dishonest, traitors, and hypocrites. With the Spaniards they keep silent, for which it is thought they are innocents; and understanding what they hear, they infer what they wish, and among them the missionaries have suffered the severest pains, not having any security in their hands. For the doctrine they are incapable, desiring to pursue their course in ignorance, and this is the especial cause of their malice. Their houses have roofs of palm, but are without walls or other surroundings. Their dress is to walk naked, with only a handkerchief, which they call *guayuco*, of a single hand square hanging from some threads of fiber

of a soft bark from the trumpet tree; and they are of such inferior natures that the women use no other clothing more decent. They make their garden for provisions, corn, yucca, yams, etc., but these plantations serve as hiding places for their traitorous acts, because with the pretext of going there, they consort with the Tomocas of Cisar river, and joining them in the woods take their turbans, bows, and arrows, and join in their rapine and murder; and that which was always done in remote times with the bodies of those that they killed, they still do, and are filled with the defects of the Tomocas. If they are accused of the evil they excuse themselves, saying that they have been detained in the plantations, or were absent hunting wild animals, or other pretext that they invent; and as these cannot be verified and the Tomocas have no thought to give evidence, they continue satisfying their appetite with inward evil concealed by an humble face. These Indians have their governor to whom they render great reverence, executing all that he orders, and as he respects the counsel of the priests, he is able to restrain them; but as not all reaches his notice, not all can be punished.

The Pampanillas Indians are neighbors of the Acanayutos. Their name is derived from small aprons that they use pendent from the belt, both men and women, without any other dress. These Indians are peaceable and so happily disposed that they are almost without manners or customs; but if you direct them to do one thing, they will almost certainly do some other thing. A few of these Indians live at the mission in Becerril, but the most live in the woods like animals, and their habits are such that in spite of their peacefulness they are feared and no person will have faith enough in them to walk with them. They make their plantations to sustain themselves, and hunt wild animals; but they are idlers, little given to work,—which can be said of all the Indians in common, and this is the principal cause of their obstinacy and resistance. They are mostly poor, although the place they inhabit is considered richer than all the others in the

province, because it is so fertile and fat and watered with such sweet crystalline waters. With the Acanayutos they have a good understanding. The women of one and the other are alike in the ceremonies of childbirth, and all are similar to the Chimiles because, as all communicate by way of the interior of the mountains, they observe almost the same customs.

The Indians all have the bad use of herbs and subtle poisons, and though they mistrust one another, they confide in herb-men to treat their illness, calling them *curaderos*. These herb-men practise among the peaceables and in the towns, and when the infirmity is not curable with herbs they say that the sickness has come from the Spaniards, from which, it is inferred, they believe they cannot have other than simple ailments, and that when they suffer those that cause virulent humors it is by contagion from the Spaniards.<sup>1</sup> They wish to make us believe that the *curaderos* know from the bite of a snake when it was caused by witchcraft and when it was accidental, because they also cure this poison and without difficulty. He who cures must have a compact with the evil one, because there are Indians who take a snake in the hands to hug it, raise it to the mouth, and wrap it around the body with all safety, although they make the flesh tremble of those who see them; and this they say is not by compact, but because they have been treated by a *corador*, that is, cured by burns that have been made in various parts of the body, introducing in them various antidotes reduced to powder and giving to drink drafts of extracts of herbs. In this preparation they employ a certain number of days and then expose the cured to the public show of the snakes, because they believe he is now free from their poison; further, they take this cure more for amusement than for practice or good effect.

The name Tupe is the same as Cerrado (Reserved), and for this similarity one word has been used in place of the other because

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<sup>1</sup> In tropical America the Indians generally claim that syphilis was introduced among them by the Spaniards.

the Tupe Indians are in the highest degree reserved and barbarous, more than any others of the province. The Tupes in the jurisdiction of the Valle are subject to doctrine and demora; they are not now such idiots in their customs as the others, although they always are in their explanations of them. The wild Tupes of the forest are similar to the other Caribs, and of them little can be written; nor will the peaceable ones give any explanations, but all in general have a prepared answer, which is this: "That is suitable," with which they put off any question they do not care to answer, and nothing more can be had from them, even though asked many times and with varied sentences.

Those Caribs who inhabit the mountains of Ocaña are called Motilones (Cut-haired). These were conquered in the beginning and established in the plains called La Cruz, where they were subject to doctrine. There occurred after a time a general epidemic of smallpox in Ocaña, and the Indians went in fear to their priest, who made them take baths and cooling drinks to moderate the natural heat of their bodies and make the smallpox less virulent among them, and finally he had them cut their hair that their heads might be cooler. This, with the destruction of infected material, would have been sufficient, but one night they made common cause together, and by force carried to the woods the priest with his vestments and other ornaments, leaving the town deserted. Six months they were fugitives, sending spies from time to time to learn the state of the epidemic, and after a while, when they were satisfied it had passed, they returned to La Cruz, bringing the priest. The neighbors, and presently the other Indians who had seen the spies with their hair cut, began to call them Motilones (Cut-haired). The priest, who had not taken his enforced retirement with much pleasure, had after that but little confidence in the continued obedience of these Indians, and went among them only when it was necessary, and for this reason, when another epidemic appeared a few years later and the Indians went to the mountains, they never returned. From

these Indians the race of Motilones descends, and from what is written is found the etymology of their name, which is a tradition reasonable to believe, because they cut their hair, and the circumstances narrated account for the motive that established this custom among their ancestors. Their manner of living is not well known, but it is certain that they have communication from their mountains with the other Indians, and it is also certain that they have departed but little from the mode of life of the other tribes. It has been unhappily experienced that they put to death as many of the whites as they can, and that in this they are quite as effective as other Indians.

The Indians of the Guagiro<sup>1</sup> nation are those who live on the seacoast from Rio de la Hacha to the Sucuy. Of these a better account can be given, because although they are not subjects, they have a voluntary communication with the Spaniards, especially to trade in pearls. In that coast is the road to "Maricabo," traveled with some risk even with the protection of armed men, because not all the nation is alike. It is supposed that it can be said that the name Guagiro is the same as to say "Valiente con ligereza," not only for the similarity of the word, but for the great conformity that they have to this, for there are not any other Indians in all the province who have the valor and agility of these. In their fights they present themselves body to body, and if it is civil war among them, they go out in troops to fight together, and presently, on presenting themselves to their enemy, they form in semicircles, each body trying to catch the other in its center to destroy it; and, without ceasing one and the other to shoot their arrows with great rapidity, give jumps and quick movements that the enemy may not secure good aim. To save oneself from this semicircle, and to break it if the opposing body is Spanish, it is necessary to have great caution in movement and continuous action, because with a pause in firing they come with their hands at the enemy, for they know that the firearms must

<sup>1</sup> This is the old spelling; today the common form is Goajira.

be reloaded, of which in the beginning they were ignorant, believing that it naturally discharged itself without the aid of fire and ball; for which it is necessary to use during war with them all military tactics. Their manner of declaring war according to their barbarous custom is, on being aggrieved, to send their ambassador, whom they call *palabra* ("talk"), asking from the person of whom they are aggrieved that right, reason, or restitution which they require, and, denied, they declare war. The enemy who receives this *palabra* has brought together a company of Indians, with their horses, ready to aid him in preparing for this war. These hear the talk, which is publicly given, and without waiting other orders they go each to secure that party of men to whom he has been commissioned. There then is a short truce that they respect, and while waiting for the commencement of hostilities the horsemen can in one day unite twelve thousand or more fighting men.

If it be a fight between persons, and the Guagiro goes out mounted, on seeing his enemy he dismounts and with the first arrow he shoots his own horse, that it can be seen that he does not have the advantage and to deny himself the possibility of fleeing; he then puts himself in front of his enemy to kill him or die at his hands, and this because they are so barbarously vain of their valor. Their manner of fighting is to go always at the enemy from the left side, twisting over the arrow and letting it go when they think the shot is sure, meanwhile passing with quick movements, jumps and turns, with the legs open and the knees bent, that it might be difficult to hit them with an arrow or a ball.

They are all generally so expert and secure in their shots with arrows that there are no others more dexterous; and in their practice they throw in the air an orange, lemon, or similar fruit, and at the same time put the arrow in the bow. It is a thing of small value among them if the fruit falls without being hit, and he who fails to do so is laughed at by his companions. In all their fights

— and they count among themselves many civil enemies — they make common cause in their hatred of the Spaniards, whom they call Arijuna. Among the many unhappy deaths given at their hands is that some years ago of a Spaniard called Tomas Quintero, whom they killed without other reason than that he had entered their territory on an occasion when they had withdrawn voluntarily from communication with Rio de la Hacha, though it was not known that they had retired. But these Indians want little incentive to kill a person, and they killed him thus most unhappily and without cause; for which traitorous act all the vicinity of Rio de la Hacha went out to make war, and it was so vigorous and bloody that the Guagiros confessed themselves beaten, asking for peace, offering not to make such acts again with the subjects of the King of Spain. To atone for the blood of Tomas, they gave to his Majesty an eagle and two heads of gold of low grade, which is the pledge they gave to maintain peace, and at present deposited in the Royal Treasury. But as they are so flexible in their words and promises there is no security from their attacks, and they maintain this peace to mean only that they shall not invade the city.

Nobody can trust a combat with a Guagiro Indian whom he has offended, even when not alone, because at a common cry there come so many that it is a horror to see them, and they should be called Chinchés from their likeness to the chinch-bugs that can hide in the smallest places.

There is no cacique among them either by inheritance or election, and their chief is he who is the richest. At present it is an Indian called Capaurinche, or Toribio. He lives in the province of Hipapa, between Bahia Honda and Chichibacoa; but as their riches are not stable, and with the civil wars that one clan makes with another, and with robbery of the haciendas, the honor passes frequently from one Indian to another. He is called rich who has his hacienda in cattle that were obtained by the frequent attacks which in past times were made against the people of Rio de la

Hacha, and money does not constitute riches among the Guagiros because they do not need it. They have the best horses on the coast, and esteem most highly those of varied colors because they hold them stronger and more able; and if one is marked with five colors, the owner says, "My horse has five coats and is five horses,"—and they esteem a horse to be equal to the number of horses according to the colors of its coat. It is difficult to persuade them to sell it; but horses can be secured if the Indian is shown some beads such as corals, garnets, colored glass, or others that the purchaser may have, and this is cheaper than money, because for that they have no need and consequently are only satisfied with much of it, and it is necessary to have great astuteness in trading with them.

They have also the vice of the jaya and use the poporo as the Aurohuacos. By carrying a little jaya it is enough to admit one to travel among them freely, and with but little expense. If a troop of two hundred or more Indians is encountered, they can be told to stop and then given of the jaya. It is polite among them that the same thing and the same portion that are given to one must be given to each of them, and so by giving a little jaya to each one of them, they are content, being satisfied with what can be taken with the thumb and two fingers, that being the portion that they are accustomed to put in the mouth to receive the lime which the stick takes from the poporo. If the traveler says he has nothing else to give them because it comes from a boat that was wrecked, they let him go more promptly, because the Indians call all the people and things they have not seen, "ship-wreck," and, hearing this, believe the traveler is not a citizen of Rio de la Hacha. They have determined that there should not pass their lands any men except those who have been wrecked on these coasts and who came with such poor fortune, and it is among them a thing poorly esteemed to molest anyone who has come among them in such trouble; from which we must infer that to say to the Guagiros "ship-wreck" is to say "a lost man."



There are among them the diviners called *mohanes*, who are understood to be the same as the *santones* of the Moors, with whom they consult for the future. As it is so many years that they have been expecting the conquest, they ask of the mohane, and he, to answer, after performing his ceremonies, sits with a lighted cigar in his mouth, and if by accident he has his back to the wind and the smoke goes from his face, as is natural, he says that it is not time for it to come; and if on the contrary the smoke comes into his face because that part is against the wind, he says that the conquest is coming, and thus with one or the other chance they are expecting it, now farther away, now nearer; but to the Spaniards they say, "When will this, your conquest, come? My father, talking with me, said the foreigner will bring this conquest; my grandfather also; now both are dead and the conquest, she has not come"—and from this they infer that all is a lie. They believe that the conquest is nothing but a woman of ferocious aspect, and they laugh at it, saying, "Conquest, what will it do with Guagiros? Guagiros plenty, plenty and brave and the conquest she only a woman."

The Guagiros are very vindictive and their hatred has no limit. In the day when one recalls to mind a person who has killed or badly treated a relative, although not very near and there had passed much time since the act was committed, he proposes to "cover the blood," and the method is to arm himself with both bow and arrow and seek the aggressor. Finding him recalls the dead, and he says, "You killed my relative and blood you have not paid to me. I have come to cover the blood." The other must now fight or pay this demand, but their custom is to pay, and usually they adjust it in so many heads of animals, horses, mules, or chickens. If the aggressor has not enough for the payment, he must ask alms among his family, who must give him as each one can, and when the animals have been collected they are given to the demander, who has not moved from there nor slept nor disarmed until he is satisfied, and putting his animals ahead of

him he leaves his creditor free, but not from the other relatives of the dead person, because each one will do the same at some time when the aggression is recalled to mind.

They who ordinarily cause this strife are the women who, having more feeling and less risk, make frequent memories, and they begin to cry with sad lamentations whether it be a relative of theirs or of their husbands, even though they had never seen him, because the feeling is to secure gain, and whether they really feel the loss or not it makes little difference. The husband asks why they cry, and they then call to his remembrance the damage, persuading him in their barbarous language to seek revenge. Because the crying and persuasions of the women are great, they make the Guagiros more bloody in their quarrels, persuading them that when they submit it is a disgrace, and that they must demand satisfaction in a great many animals. They call an animal ten pieces whether it is of cows, horses, mules, pigs, or birds, and thus the animals really asked for are few, though the number of pieces they demand may be many. It is necessary to have great judgment, particularly if the person against whom demand is made is a Spaniard. But there are among us men so sagacious that with the same custom of the Indians they make gain even though they satisfy the number of animals that are asked: for in a short time they seek their demander, and fixing on him a damage or murder caused by a relative of that Indian (who because he had received atonement for blood must now give in atonement without fighting), and asking of him double, the Spaniard has the advantage because the Guagiro, although he has not with which to pay, must ask alms among his people, and this they must quickly give because they hold this justice with great care although with bad methods.

Their ordinary dress is a mantle of cotton goods dyed a dark color, with a hole in the center for the head. The mantle, hanging pendent over the left shoulder, falls to the knees; it is secured by a belt, leaving the right arm free to handle the arrows.

The dress for the women is similar, and to distinguish them among themselves their only sign is an anklet of beads on each ankle. The poor women use glass beads, and those who are rich, corals or fine garnets. Some use necklaces about the neck, and if the woman or man is important among them the mantle is white with various adornments of color. They esteem the Spaniard who is dressed with care and take him for a great man, saying that the King of the Spaniards has arrived; and if the dress is red, it is of much greater importance; but a rough, ill-bred person cannot influence them with fine clothes.

These Indians do not have home, nor hut, nor any fixed habitation, living only beneath the trees, and moving from place to place according to the seasons and the search for the wild fruits of all that coast; because it is with these and wild roots that they maintain themselves. Wherever they go they carry with them their cattle, horses, mules, chickens, dogs, and all that they have. They do not eat much beef, being reluctant to kill their animals, and this is the reason so many come to the Rio de la Hacha in time of feasts when they wait to share in the animals that are killed during those days. That which they commonly eat is fish, mollusks, lobsters, crabs, and tortoises, which they secure in the waters of that coast. Of animals they hunt deer, armadillos, land tortoises, and other various kinds, but they are not of common use. *Yucca* serves them for bread, and for vegetables various wild fruits and roots which they know and like.

The principal Indians sleep in net hammocks which they hang below the trees, and the others, and also the women, sleep in the sand without either bed or cover, except the mantle, or even naked. Each Indian takes the women he can maintain, for in this they distinguish the richest. They live together without any ceremony, for it is their custom and Heaven cannot move them to break it. They all sleep but little, for at nights is their heaviest eating. They never quit the hand from the poporo, and because of this vice they have their teeth black, and as their skins are of very

dark color, the body painted, and the limbs well placed, they are ferocious in aspect. The truth is not found among these Indians, particularly when they speak with Spaniards, with whom they delight to chat ; and, unhappily, any damage they can do, even to afflict a Spaniard with death, is a merit among them. They are so averse to the Spaniards that nothing can be done with them, and even the children who have been taken and trained with care depart from this teaching and become three or four times more beastly than the others. If an Indian sees a Spaniard pass, he observes closely the road taken, and when the traveler is lost to sight, mounts his fastest horse and goes to his ranch to give notice, saying, "Spaniard now has passed. I come after." He tells the road taken, and there go various men to give notice in the neighboring ranches, and when the poor traveler thinks himself most secure, he finds the road stopped with fifty or more Guagiros asking him of what he carries, and if he has not enough to content them, they attack him, and in this way have killed many.

Among these barbarians can be seen various interesting games. Among them the game of ball is much used, because with it they advance the exercise of the arrow, thus giving them strength for battle. They form the ball from the skin of a goat, filled with cotton well pressed. One throws it in the air, and below it there gather, with many jumps and movements, ten, twelve, twenty or more Guagiros, each with his bow and his belt well provided with arrows, which they call *cipotes* because they have the points in the form of a top. One shoots his arrow before the ball falls, which then returns upward in proportion to the force, and the Indian changes his place in the group of men to put another arrow in his bow, and as it descends another shoots his arrow, sending it high again, and with regular movement passes to put another arrow from his belt, and this is done successively by the others, forming at the same time a pleasing dance, and with their shots maintaining the ball in the air two or three hours, which exercise, while it amuses them, gives them ability for their combats. He who is

not able to take part in the circle is but little esteemed, and must practise alone or with boys and younger men until he is capable of appearing in the public act.

The Guagiros Indians have a peculiar fast, to which they submit the young Indian maidens, for which no reason can be given except that it is an irrational custom. Some prudent men studying this custom find among these Indians a resemblance to the Hebrews, who, as they believed, shut in the young maidens at certain times in expectation of the coming of the Messiah. The custom of the Guagiros is this. Near the time in which the Indian maiden is to become a woman, her father forms a small hut of grass, which they call the "yard of earth," and in this they shut her, and it is said that they do not allow sun, moon, water, air, nor dew to touch her, and they say she is in *cuyma*. Here they keep her fifteen days without giving her other provision than water and fire, which is truly a terrible fast, and it results that she comes out of the hut after fifteen suns, as they sometimes call this fast, white and transparent as a fine sheet of paper. With food they regain flesh, and with the heat of the sun and other inclemencies of those coasts, return to an ordinary color. If, during the imprisonment, anyone asks for her, they answer that she is in *cuyma*, with which they know all the circumstances, and believing that she will shortly be married, they begin to feast.

Among the Indians it is not the child of the father who inherits; the property goes to the maternal nephews, the Indian saying, "They are more nearly of my blood." The sons of the sisters not only inherit the property of their uncle, but also his wives, and if the nephews cannot maintain them all and their own, they repudiate from among them all as many as they wish, retaining only the number of women they can maintain; and those who have been repudiated are no longer known as wives, and this is according to the law. If the Guagiros, from choice or by force of predestination, dies in our Catholic faith in any of the cities of doctrine, and leaves, as is just, his goods to be administered by

the priest (who if he can find his maternal children gives them the property), then the nephews who expect to inherit make demand to the principal chief, who makes inquiry among the Indians of the circumstances of the death, and finding that it was according to our Catholic rites, decides that the Indian died as a white man and his children have a right to enjoy his inheritance. After this the nephews make no further claim, but if they find the Indian died in his idolatry, they give his goods to his nephews, leaving the children disinherited and poor.

The ceremonies for the burial of those who die in their idolatry they make according to the castes [clans] by which they are distinguished. Thus: Casta de Guacamaya [macaw] (this is the highest), Casta de Paguil (turkey), Casta de Guacharaca (a kind of brush hen), Casta de Mono (monkey), Casta de Machin (small monkey), Casta de Gallinazo [turkey-buzzard] (this is the poorest). The ceremonies consist of crying, dancing, and eating more or less in proportion to the caste, and if he who is in affliction is poor and asks alms for the remembrance of the dead, all give it. If a Spaniard gives to a Guagiro—which he does at times—strings of beads, a blanket, a skein of worsted, or a knife to please him that he may dive for pearls in order to make return for the gift, and the Indian says, "Relative, my heart is happy," it is a sign that he is pleased with the gift and the giver can expect the recompense; but if he says nothing, he is not pleased, and the goods might as well have been thrown away.

These Indians have various customs which for obscenity cannot be written. Their ceremonies of child-birth are the same as those among the other Indians, including also the cold baths in the river. The men of the smaller cities are under control, but they still retain their own customs, and though the priests have worked earnestly they can do nothing to make them contented with one wife, and even in places subject to doctrine one is accustomed to hear them say, "My head is hard as a tree; it is better to teach the children who have soft heads," and against this the priests

place many penalties, but the transgressors always say, "Capuchino [Priest] as Guagiros, no; Guagiros better with hair on his head and the Capuchino with hair on the face." They have a sergeant major and a captain of all their nation, nominated by the Governor of Santa Marta from among the most rational of the descendants of the Indian Salguero, to whom they render fear and respect; but as all are as treacherous as they are dangerous, they give little obedience and are continually at civil war one with the other.

There is in that coast, on the part nearest Sucuy, a mountain which, because it is formed like a bent person, they call the Corcovado, and the Guagiros who are born there take the same name and are called Corcovados, for they are so like the nature of the country that nearly all are hunch-backed; and those Spaniards who go to that territory to obtain pearls, or go to "Maricabo," assure us that not only the Indians but also their animals and even the birds are generally hunch-backed,—of which it must be inferred that this is caused by the star influencing that place, and that country seems of an evil influence, for it is true that these Indians are averse to our Catholic doctrine, though they are known to have heard the voice of the Evangelist.

Near them are the Indians called Cocinas, which name is the same as to say Tiznasdos, because to preserve themselves from the mosquitos they use an ointment taken from the fruit of a plant called *jagua* which gives the body a black color which, when they perspire, becomes shining and lustrous. These Indians are more barbarous than any of the Guagiros, and consequently less tractable and more dangerous, horrible, and proud. Their customs nobody has studied, but as they are almost as the Guagiros and are considered to be of the same race, their customs are supposed to be similar. These Indians were visited by the venerable Father Luis Vero and by his holy companion San Luis Beltran, whom they understood, for he had the holy gift of tongues and he communicated to them the divine Providence. Among all the Indians

many have preached and labored, but of little avail ; and of truth if the Indians could all be subjected to the Church, great good would come to the Province of Santa Marta and to Rio de la Hacha.

#### RECENT OBSERVATIONS

The Indian tribes of which Father de la Rosa wrote more than 160 years ago have now almost entirely disappeared. The Goajiras are still a vigorous race, and the fierce Motilones are said to be increasing rapidly in the wild fastnesses of their country of the Painted Andes, but of the other tribes there is scarce a memory. Broken pottery and stone implements cover the ground where their villages stood ; frequently in passing through the woodlands low mounds of earth indicate the sites of populous cities, and widely separated one from another live a few miserable, scattered remnants of a once numerous people.

Of these little can be said, but those who remain indicate a low type of man. They have thick lips, irregular, flat faces, short heads, and poor physical development, their identity having almost entirely been lost through long service to the conquerors. Of the Chimiles or Chimelones there are a few remaining in the woodlands southwest of Santa Marta. Once they were dangerous and much dreaded ; now they are anybody's friend, but have little to commend them. Extremely ignorant, degenerate, and dirty, they live in miserable huts and run through the woodlands almost nude, using a gourd fastened around the waist in place of the robe or loin-cloth of the more sturdy Indians.

There are so few of the Chimiles that they are worthy of only passing notice ; and of the other tribes mentioned by Father de la Rosa as belonging to the lowlands and brought under the direct influence of the Spaniards, all have disappeared. Here and there a few people of mixed Indian, Spanish, and negro blood are found, but that is all. They have no traditions or tribal life among themselves and of them there is little to be written. The



Goajiras are still a vigorous race, and though they occupy the lowlands, their country is an isolated peninsula and they have been left very much to themselves.

In the elevated fastnesses of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta live the remnants of a once powerful tribe. Their country overlooks all the great territory formerly occupied by the Indians of the lowlands. These mountain Indians are known as the Aurohuacas<sup>1</sup> and are such a peculiar people, differing so completely from all others that I have seen near the Caribbean sea, that they must be the remnants of a very ancient and much more highly developed people, who at some remote time were driven to take refuge among the higher mountains because of incroachments and violence of more savage neighbors.

In all their life and customs an ancient descent seems indicated. Nominally they are all humbly obedient to the teachings of Franciscan missionaries who have preached among them for many years; but in spite of the little chapel built in their principal city of San Miguel, they still cling to their ancient customs and beliefs, but have no objection to a variety of teachings and assent quite readily to all that the priest tells them. Their chiefs are called *mamas* and are apparently not elected or appointed by any ceremony, but whoever, after listening to legends and watching ceremonies, can imitate what he has seen and remember what he has heard, may aspire to be a *mama*, his efforts being more or less successful according to his skill in impressing his hearers, or his good fortune in healing the sick and predicting the future. The Aurohuacas divide the *mamas* in two classes, "proved *mamas*" (*mama probow*<sup>2</sup>) and "*mamas*."<sup>3</sup> A small boy, living near their country, who had been among them and could imitate anything, because of very sharp memory, was beginning to be held in some reverence and was known as *Mama Pelu*, hence by this time he may have acquired great influence among the Indians.

<sup>1</sup> Commonly spelled Erguaca and pronounced *Erwaca*.

<sup>2</sup> Indian patois for *probado*.

<sup>3</sup> That is, *mamas* without established reputation.

By this method naturally the best men come to the front—those having a retentive memory, a commanding presence, ambition to rule, and an insight into character to assist their predictions and divinations.

In appearance the Aurohuacas are rather impressive. Their dress, a long robe of coarsely woven cotton, falls to the knees, leaving the throat, arms, and feet bare; a belt of knotted sisal holds the garment in place, and a band of the same material about the head keeps some order among their great masses of heavy black hair which falls otherwise unrestrained about the neck and shoulders. The country they inhabit is cold—so cold that in the higher mountains there is perpetual snow and all the streams are icy in temperature;—yet in spite of this the children have but little clothing and must go every day at sunrise to bathe in the clear mountain streams. But they are not a vigorous people; few children are born to them, and before many years probably all will have disappeared. Throughout the mountains there are remains of a once numerous people; now it is probable that in all their territory there are fewer than one thousand full-blood Indians. The broad mountain valleys of their country are so desirable and fertile that before many years a stronger race must undoubtedly dispossess them.

Of strange marriage customs those of the Aurohuacas certainly deserve prominence. The man who determines to take a wife must first build his house, or more correctly his houses, for he will require two of them—low, circular structures with tall, sharp-pointed, thatched roofs—one somewhat larger for himself and the other just behind it for his wife. After the *mama* has declared them married they go home by different roads, the woman to her house and the man to his, and from that day never by any circumstance will they go into each other's houses, nor do they so much as speak together while at home. When the wife prepares food for her husband, she places it on a stone between the two houses, where she leaves it; then the man comes and takes the

food to his house. Having eaten, he returns to the stone the empty gourds in which the food was served, and goes away; then the wife comes and takes them again. They have only one place that is common ground to them, and that is their garden, where in some secluded spot they cultivate the soil together. At all other times they are strictly separated, and the reason for it all is, as stated by Father de la Rosa, their belief that a child conceived without the light of the sun will be born blind and have no light in its eyes.

From this it may be inferred that they worship the sun, or at least hold it in high veneration, that in their domestic politics the garden, its industry and products, must be the basis of their life, and that the restraints of their separate houses indicate that the married relation has for them responsibility as well as convenience, placing these Indians, degenerate though they are, far above any of the other tribes inhabiting the Caribbean region.

Of strange beliefs, ceremonies, and traditions, their thoughts and customs are overflowing; ask where they learned all these things, they will say their fathers told them and charged them to tell their children that nothing might be lost.

To write of all would require a volume, but of the more important and interesting something can be said. As the basis of their government is their veneration of the *mamas*, these men can properly be noticed first. Each *mama* is at once priest, governor, and doctor for the people of his village. He leads the religious ceremonies and dances, advises in disputes, makes divinations for the future; but principally his duty is to heal the sick, and if successful in this, he becomes a *mama probow* (*probado*, "proved") and is held in great veneration. The methods practised by the *mamas* are quite in accord with the claims of Christian Scientists, and the heathen *mama* is quite as successful as the enthusiast who claims divine intervention. The Aurohuacas object to taking medicine, and believe that all sickness is a punishment for sin. When a man sends for the *mama* he expects to

make a full confession. On entering the sick-room the *mama* goes through a series of motions as he passes in front of the sick person; then coming closer he moves his hands mysteriously over the face, arms, and feet of his patient, and taking him by the wrist, asks in a deep voice if he wishes to confess his sins. Usually the patient replies that he does, but if not, the *mama* simply goes away. When the confession is heard, all others are put out of the hut while the *mama* and his patient confer. After hearing all the confession, the *mama* decides whether the sins are mortal or whether they can be forgiven and the patient recover his health. This requires some judgment; the *mama* must decide from the condition of the patient, because he can become equally famous by telling a patient that he must die for his sins (which on being so informed he usually does without much further delay), as he can by predicting renewed health and prescribing the formula for recovery. This formula varies according to the sins confessed; the belief is that stones or sea-shells have the power of working a charm to propitiate the evil influence, and the lore of their stone-medicine is endless. Often some peculiar pebble, strange sea-shell, or curious stone will bring almost any price when these Indians happen to need that special kind. The *mama* having found that the patient can recover, gives careful instructions as to the bits of stone, pebble, or shells that must be obtained by the sick person's relations to effect his cure. This is done by setting up a charm on which his sins can rest. When it is procured, the material must be taken to some spot among the mountains—usually high on the upper ridges where the sun falls as it first rises. Here a rough piece of stone is set up, and the few fragments that have been obtained with such effort are laid before it. The party then returns, and if the patient recovers, great is the fame of the *mama*; if he dies, the Indians say the *mama* is no good, but he is still a *mama*. The charm on which the sin may rest, set up where the rising sun can first reach it, brings the veneration of the sun into prominence; and if awe is akin to

worship, the inspiring sights of golden tropical sunlight flooding deep valleys, the towering rocks, the long shadows among the mountains, the glittering light of the sunshine on the mantle of perpetual snow, the silence of the night time, or the weird distant uncertainties as a dense fog floats among the mountains in deep contrast to the wealth of sunlight, may well inspire awe, and is perhaps the reason for this form of the Indian's worship.

During the rainy season, when the sun is hidden behind great masses of dark clouds, the Indians set up a wailing for their sins, believing that the sun is angry and may never shine on them again.

It is rumored that these Indians have an ancient massive stone temple hidden in the deep valleys of the interior mountains. They will not answer any questions, but the rumor is generally believed, and it is said that long ago there were Indians who would tell of its glories. It is supposed to be square, or oblong, of massive, roofless stone walls, that inclose a great carved stone altar of dark granite on which, or on the wall back of which, there is a great model of the sun in pure gold with a golden image of a bird of great size standing before the altar to attend on the sun. Here it is said they go every year or two for the purpose of holding strange ceremonies, but where the place is no one knows. This much, however, is certain: when the proper season comes, most of the Indians disappear, and after a time return as mysteriously as they went.

Among other strange beliefs they have a fixed faith in a prophet whom they call the Tach. They say that he came to them out of the sea and that he will return to make them a great people. In the latter part of December or early in January, according to the time of the new moon, they all assemble and dance in expectation of the coming of the Tach. They perform strange motions with masks on their faces, and robes, stone ornaments, and brightly-colored objects hanging about them. The men dance by themselves in what they call the *canzamaría*, or native temple, but the

women dance apart by themselves beyond the temple. These temples, of which there are a number among the mountains, are little more than the ordinary circular huts used by the Indians for houses, but are made larger, with a really high roof, from the peak of which three poles protrude like an inverted tripod, on each of which is placed a large clay cylinder or bottomless jar. Inside the *canzamaría* there is nothing, the material for the various ceremonies being brought by those who are to participate in the dance or worship. These dances are performed by making motions with the body, taking quick steps from side to side or forward and backward, accompanied by subdued cries and a sort of refrain that is droned as the dancers proceed. The dances are named after different birds, animals, or people, which are supposed to be imitated in the performance. The white men are honored with a dance supposed to represent people who have become quite crazy.

Of their prophet they will say very little, but an Indian told the story to me, though it required urging from a Colombian who had heard it and wished that I should hear the story from the Indians themselves. His account, in brief, was as follows:

Long ago, longer than the lives of the oldest *mamas* and in the days of their fathers (fathers of the *mamas*), whose names had been forgotten, a stranger came up out of the sea. His skin was white, but he was not pleasant to look upon because his hair had grown wrong and covered his face, and not his head where it should have been; and the people thought to kill him, but the *mamas* to whom he first had come, and who were wise, gave hospitality and kept him alive. His dark garment was girt about the waist and flowed below his knees. When the people saw that no harm came, they were no more afraid, and saw that he had clear, kind eyes. They helped him and he lived among them; but he wanted little, and when the time came that they could hear his voice—that is, when he could speak their language,—he taught them all things that were good, and the fathers who lived

so long ago that their names are forgotten told their sons, who told it again that the story might be remembered.

This man was the Tach, and his teachings are these: That to worship the sun is right, that it is holy and quickens all life; that gold represents the sun on the earth and it is holy, and those who gather it must hide it and let no stranger look on it, in order that there should be much gold when he returned; and when he came again he promised to make them a great people. And he prophesied, saying that others with hair grown wrong and covering their faces would come, but they would be different and none could trust them, and he who bargained with them would carry away not enough and would give too much. To these strangers no gold should be shown, nor should they see the temple and holy gold (perhaps the golden images of the sun and the bird), because on the day in which they saw them they would carry all away and the sun would be angry and never shine on the mountains again.

And the Tach said, "Live at peace and shed no man's blood, but cultivate the soil, have gardens, and eat plenty." And he charged them to live only with their own people and take no strangers—not Indians nor white men with hair on their faces—into the tribe, but remain a people apart, yet hospitable. And if strangers came, to receive them with hospitality, for he came as a stranger and would so return, but that no stranger must stay too long in the land, for that would not be good. Then he taught them all the lore of sins, sickness, and death, and the healing charms of stones on which the sin could rest, and he went away to the sea but will return out of it again.

This is probably their conception of the teachings of a missionary priest who chanced among them and who, seeing gold, thought of the necessities of the church and what a great people the church could make of the Indians if it only had the money; but when they heard of a second coming, the Indians naturally thought that the priest spoke only of himself.

A very practical result of this legend is that the Aurohuaca Indians have been collecting and hoarding gold for perhaps three centuries and are supposed to have tons of it hidden among the mountains. An old Spaniard living near their country claims to have seen part of the treasure when he was a boy, at a time when the Indians were moving a hoard of gold to a more secure place. He told me that there was as much as several oxen could carry, and that it was welded into rings and bars.

The Aurohuacas claim that if they show gold, or any of the places where it is found, to white men, they will die—all of which is quite true, for there is no doubt that the *mamas* will kill them.

Strangers are hospitably received, but they must not stay too long, for the legend of the Tach says that no good can come of it. If the visit is prolonged, the Indians will begin to say, "He will go soon; he will not stay much longer; now another road awaits him, he must travel"—and if the stranger does not take the hint, he will presently be poisoned, and the Indians will say, "Now he travels another road," but they will do no violence, for the legend of the Tach forbids it.

The ordinary life of the Aurohuaca is devoted to tending his garden, herding his cattle, assisting in dances, and listening to legends of other days. Their territory could probably support hundreds of thousands, yet they themselves are dying out, very probably because of the constant use of the *poporo*, as described by Father de la Rosa. The leaf is from a species of coca, similar to that from which cocaine is manufactured. Toasted and mixed with quick-lime these leaves must be a very violent compound, and its constant use is the only apparent reason why a people living in a healthful, temperate country, where everything is beautiful, should be degenerating and passing utterly away. They live in villages, and are among themselves sociable, talkative, and apparently very happy; with strangers they are reserved, and few gain their confidence.

That they were once a powerful people is attested by the



remains found all through their country, but now so few of their number are left that great stretches of their mountains are entirely uninhabited, and probably in two or three generations none will have survived.

Across the broad interior valley, beyond the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta, lies the northeastern spur of the Andes, known as the Painted mountains, because of the alternate black and white strata, like great hands, which extend at places along their precipitous fronts. Here a tribe known as Motilones have their homes, but about them little is known, except that they resemble the Indians of the lowlands, and that they are savage and dangerous. No one has seen much of their villages, for with strangers they will have nothing to do, and to meet with them is to kill or be killed. Unfortunately, they are aggressive, and the traveler near the Painted Andes can never be sure that the next turn of the road may not bring a shower of poisoned arrows from Motilon Indians, hiding in the long grass or among the bushes that cover the plains below their mountains. How many there are of this tribe is not known, but it is supposed that they are numerous, and that in time they will overrun all the exposed portions of that country. Recently, as I was passing near this territory, Colombian planters told me that the Motilones were becoming more and more aggressive and numerous, and that unless something was done to check their encroachment, all the coffee plantations of the Painted Andes would have to be abandoned. Little is known about these Indians, and I have no direct information concerning them save what is gathered from the *Floresta*.

Northeast of the Andean terminus is a broad, level peninsula, inhabited by the Goajira Indians and named after them. These people are in full vigor, and form an interesting comparison with the other degenerate tribes of the Caribbean regions. Strength, fine health, and the free carriage of confidence at once stamp these people as different from the cringing Indians of other tribes. The Goajiras are dangerous, but they will fight, not poison, and

will give notice to the enemy to prepare for defense. They are hospitable in the extreme, and once received as a guest, the traveler is safe. Of medium stature, of deep mahogany or perhaps copper color, wearing an effective dress of white cotton, embroidered with red worsted along the edges, the left arm bare and the whole costume falling in easy folds about the body, a tall red feather in the hair, held in place by a plaited band of fiber, they present a striking picture, which is intensified by the glow of health that is one of their general characteristics. The costume mentioned is worn when they are dressed for effect; at other times they wear a mantle or smaller robe of dark cotton stuff, usually very dirty, and frequently they wear nothing but a loin-cloth. They live much in the open, sleeping with no covering, exposed to the heavy tropical dews, and making no complaint when the burning sun beats on their almost naked bodies. Once I was in a canoe with some young Goajira Indians and suffering intensely from the heat of the sun; but the Indians paddled along without complaint and I, wondering at their endurance, laid my hand on one of their naked backs and found it cool and pleasant, although the wood of the canoe was burning hot.

These Indians bear resemblance to those of North America, and there is rumor of a legend among them that they once came from the north and conquered their country. Among them a peculiar type is seen which all claim is of full Goajira blood, yet there is no resemblance, even to the Indian type. The face is large, the chin full and rounded; while the cheek bones, which in most of the Indians are very prominent, are symmetrical. The head is full, the hair curly, and the nose large and well formed; the type is almost Roman; indeed, in their flowing robes, these grave, commanding Indians remind one of fancied Roman senators, rather than wild men of the tropics. Others of the Goajira nation are small and distinctively Indian in all their features: these are usually people of the lower classes, for caste distinctions are rigidly maintained, and those who command are usually larger

and much finer people. This distinction of types in the tribe, together with the pride in descent or caste, may be the heritage of a remote conquest centuries ago, after which the weaker settled down to serve the strange invaders.

Their government is strictly patriarchal and the different families or clans are frequently at war with each other. So bitter is their hatred, once it is aroused, that their feuds extend to extermination, and life is but little valued in their country.

As a rule they are not friendly to strangers, and it is always dangerous to go among them. A person with light eyes is particularly obnoxious in their opinion. They say, "Eyes like a cat; come, let us kill him!"

Their laws are respect for established custom, rather than rules for procedure. Their respect for inherited position seems very strange for wild men; acquired wealth, which brings power, is of prime importance, but he who inherits wealth takes a position and wields power that a successful, industrious Indian can never attain, no matter how wealthy.

Polygamy is practised, but the customs establishing it are of some wisdom and where adhered to are productive of good results. The basis of these customs is that a man may have as many wives as he can maintain, and the more he has the greater his importance, but to secure them he must first provide an endowment.

The Indian girls are sold to their husbands, but their parents have nothing to say in the matter, the maternal uncles having full authority which the girl must recognize. The marriage ceremony consists of a series of fastings and exchanges of presents between the family of the bride and her husband; every present must be returned with another of equal value, and as the endowment must first be provided, it is for them a matter of some expense to be married. This endowment must be sufficient to maintain the wife in the position to which she was born, and as no Goajira will marry beneath his position, many of the men must remain without wives, though the greater number of them usually manage to

obtain one, and polygamy is not so frequent among them as one might expect.

After the purchase of the bride has been negotiated with her maternal uncles, who fix the value of her social position, they are supposed to take charge of whatever is received, payment being usually made in cattle. Among the ruling classes a small herd is required, but with the poor people five goats are regarded as sufficient. The uncles, on receiving the property, take careful account of it and put the animals out on the range for pasture; there they are maintained and allowed to increase. If the man grows tired of his wife, he has simply to tell her to take her property and go home to her mother, and the divorce is complete; but if they live happily, which is usually the case, the property is divided among the wife's children, each taking a share as they reach a certain age. If the Indian dies, the wife takes her property; but if their children have already inherited it, they are morally obliged to care for her, and she becomes a person of great consideration in their household.

This custom works well when adhered to, but frequently the uncles, after disposing of the girl, appropriate the property and assume the responsibility of delivering it when occasion requires, and this leads to endless quarrels and disputes.

The Goajiras were once cannibals and are still said to practise that barbarity at times. Not long ago a Colombian, living at Rio Hacha, who had traded with these Indians for many years, disappeared, or rather never returned from one of his excursions to the Indian country. No man had ever been more popular with the Indians, and it was supposed that he had lost his life through some accident. His eldest son assumed charge of the business and in time became more popular even than his father had been. One day, while seated with the patriarch, or chief, who had been his father's greatest friend, and while they were eating a wild hog which the Indians had killed, and drinking a plentiful supply of rum, the young man said, "This hog is very good" (*sabrosa*, as

they say in Spanish)—to which the chief, now fairly drunk, replied, "Yes, but your papa, he more *sabrosa* still; we eat him all up!"

The Goajira Indians have never been conquered ; they break into small parties before their enemy and keep up a guerilla warfare, always retiring, but never giving up. At present they are quiet and generally well disposed, but this is owing entirely to the efforts of a party of Franciscan missionaries who some years ago went boldly among them and have since been accomplishing very much for their benefit.

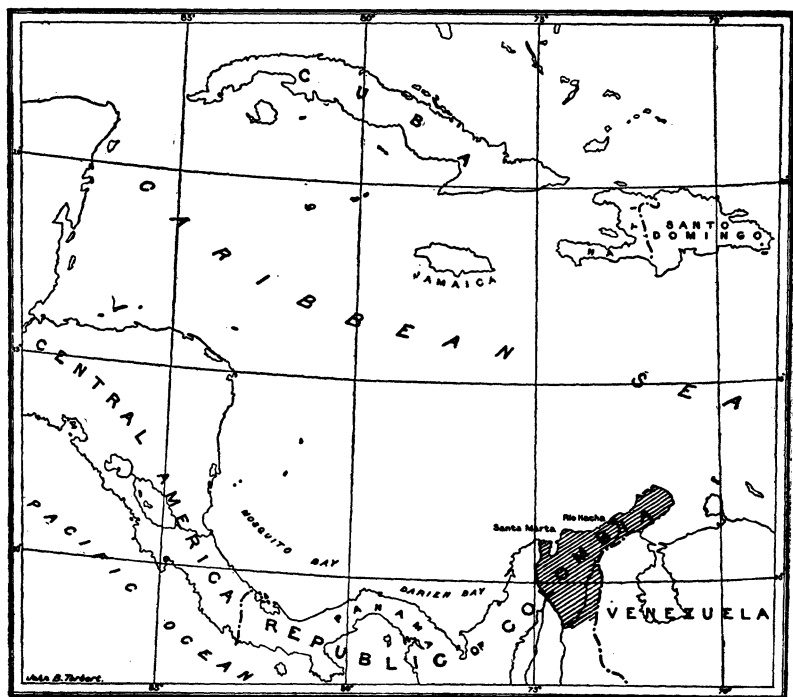


FIG. 72— The Province of Santa Marta, Colombia, and adjacent region.